

CONTRA COSTA COMMUNITY LIBRARY  
FINAL SCRIPT

**Narration:** The National Medal for Museum and Library Services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exceptional ways. Contra Costa Community Library director Barbara L. Flynn and community member Gladys Leeks traveled to Washington from Pleasant Hill, California to receive the national medal and spoke to IMLS about how the library impacts the community.

**Barbara Flynn:** Contra Costa County Library is Contra Costa County, California which is across from San Francisco. It means the "other side" so we're the other side from San Francisco. We have 26 libraries in 18 cities in 1,000 square miles. We serve everyone from babies in the lap to the eldest senior citizen with a variety of programs which does include books but it's not limited to books. It's books, it's DVDs, CDs, books on tape, electronic books. Well, we like to say and I truly believe that the library is at the heart of the community.

**Barbara Flynn:** Project Second Chance is our literacy program for adults. It gives people a second chance at life, at learning how to read and spell and enjoy all the wonderful things that books have to offer.

**Gladys Leeks:** First visits to the library was taking my grandchildren and checking out books and bringing them back where they could read.

**Gladys Leeks:** I brought them to the library because I grew up not knowing how to read and spell and wanting to make sure that they took every opportunity, everything that I could give them that they would learn and know how to read and spell growing up.

**Gladys Leeks:** I lost 104 pounds from Weight Watchers. The desire was to work for Weight Watchers. And so to work for Weight Watchers one of the requirements was to read. I had to learn the program. I had to read about the program. And they told me they didn't know if I would be able to work for Weight Watchers because they had never ran into anyone who couldn't read. My oldest son who was a doctor told me to check out a program that was at-- he just gave me where the program was. It was at the library. And I told him no. I have been through programs all my life. All from a child I was in Special Ed, every kind of program there was, adult educational programs and it would always lead back to the same. I would go no further than what I was. So really it was to kind of close his mouth because he wasn't giving up. I went into this program and how to read. And I don't know, what is Karen, Karen what is her?

**Barbara Flynn:** Well she's a tutor-trainer.

**Gladys Leeks:** Who is excellent and I sat down and she had me to read.

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**Gladys Leeks:** But the main thing that I learned from the beginning was as everybody all my life had always told me "Sound it out. Sound it out." And so when Karen the instructor said "Sound this out." And that was the first time that I asked her "What is a sound?" I didn't know what a sound was. I didn't know that letters had sounds. And so when that came about I started getting training to learn the sounds. Sounds would spell words.

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**Gladys Leeks:** I don't think people know that these programs are at the library. I had heard years ago that the library had a program that would teach you how to read. The first thought went into my mind these were retired people who had nothing else to do and decided they wanted to come in and help maybe teach somebody how to read without the skills. So my thought was no. But now these tutors that they have now, they are skilled .

**Barbara Flynn:** It's a volunteer program. We train volunteers to be tutor and do everything we can to meet our individual student's needs to teach them to read and spell.

**Gladys Leeks:** Project Second Chance opened the door that opened the world of reading that opened another life. I don't think you realize, most people don't realize if you can't read, you don't function.